

## **Information for the News Media**

Public Information Office

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### **Texas, Arkansas establish concealed handgun license reciprocity**

Arkansans with concealed handgun licenses issued by their home state now can legally carry concealed handguns in Texas, and vice versa.

Col. Dudley M. Thomas, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, signed a reciprocity agreement with the State of Arkansas through which licensees can legally cross that state line with their concealed handguns.

"This agreement will allow licensed Texans to travel freely in our neighboring state of Arkansas while enjoying the same or similar privileges their licenses give them at home," Thomas said.

This reciprocity agreement - the first Texas has reached with another state - was made possible by 1997 changes to the state's concealed handgun law.

When the law first was passed in 1995, reciprocity would have been allowed only with states whose standards for receiving a license was at least as stringent as Texas'. Since Texas' law requires more extensive training and background checks than most others, no reciprocity agreements were negotiated.

However, the Texas Legislature revised the law in 1997 making reciprocity agreements possible as long as other states' laws meet the federal requirements for purchasing a handgun.

"We are working with several other states -- especially our close neighbors -- to establish more reciprocity agreements," Thomas said. "But Texans should remember that weapons laws vary from state to state."

Before traveling, license holders should educate themselves about laws in other states that govern where and when they can legally carry their concealed handguns.

**For a recorded sound bite on this topic, call 512-424-2606**